

St. Catherines Place London
at College of Physicians and
La vindicatione de

777. l. 1. 12
1715

T was little expected by the Colladge of Physicians,
that after (—————) they had openly de-
clared in their Publick Assembly, that none of them
would oppose the Apothecaries Bill, and some per-
haps beyond their Duty had actually assisted them
therin, they should for all that find themselves fre-
quently reflected upon both in their Publick Papers
and Pleadings to the Two Houses of Parliament, which
occasions this short but Necessarie Vindication of
the Colladge and Faculty.

The chief thing the Apothecaries would insinuate in their great Charity,
is specially to the Poor sort of People and Servants, which they pretend to
be under their immediate Care, intimating thereby that the Physicians will
do nothing for Charity to the Poor; but this is so far from being true, that
frequent Complaints have been made to the President, and Censors of the
Colladge, of their Extortions and Unreasonableness in their Bills to the poorer
People; and whereas the Physicians are always ready to give Advice ~~gratis~~ ^{gratis} to the Poor in their Several Wards, both in the City and Suburbs, and
are obliged so to do by a standing Order of the Colladge (which was formerly
by them presented to the Lord Mayor, and the Court of Aldermen, to be
published in the several Wards) yet the Poor can have no benefit thereby, be-
cause of the excessive Rates the Apothecaries demand for the Physick; whereas
would they sell their Medicines to the Poor either for their intrinsick Value,
or at moderate Prices, the Physicians having obliged themselves to take care
of the Poor ~~gratis~~, this Order might be effectual, and for the Publick
Good!

The second thing they recommend themselves for, is their diligent Atten-
dance upon Sick Persons of all sorts, Day and Night, and we acknowledge
they are very busy to make themselves necessary in all Families; but this is
plainly for their own Profit, to promote their Private Practice, which under
the notion of giving Physick to the Poor, they would subtilly introduce and
establish, being in the mean time well paid for the Physick they give to
the meanest. And for the Rich, they find an opportunity by their pretend-
ed Care and Sedulity to ingratiate themselves with the Patients, whilst in
the mean time their true intent is to spy what Bottles are empty, to find
fault with the *Jaleps* and *Cordials*, that they are grown sour and want re-
newing; and so take occasion by frequent repeating of the Medicines on
their own Heads, without the Physicians knowledge, to increase their Bills to
an incredible Rate, whereby they fill their own Purles, to the great Oppression
of the Patient, whom they often also charge for their officious Visits, and some-
times demand Fees for their Advice.

'Tis true, the Apothecaries attendance abroad may in some extraordinary
Cases be necessary, but generally their Duty is at home, where they would
do the Patient the best Service, in faithfully and carefully making up the
Physician's Prescriptions, and preventing their frequent and many fatal Mistakes
committed by their Ignorant Boys. But as for administering the Medicines
prescribed to the Patient, there is little need of the Apothecaries attendance,
which may be very well done without, by the Servants and Nurses, according
to the plain Directions in *English* of the Physician. And the Colladge was so
sensible of this, and the many Mistakes made by the Apothecaries in English-
ing their *Latin* Directions, that they made a Statute obliging all their Mem-
bers to write in their Bills to them, only Instructions for the compounding
the Medicine, but to leave Directions in *English* at the Patient's House for
the

the use of them. This must needs have much pleas'd the *Apothecaries* if they had found their frequent *Attendance* burdensom, and had not had some farther End therein: But they were so far from taking this kindly from the *Colledge*, though manifestly for their Ease as well as the Publick Good, that they brought down the Lord *Chancellor Jeffreys* in great Fury to visit the *Colledge*, though he was at last satisfi'd with the great Reasons the *Colledge* had for making that Statute.

The third good thing these Men say of themselves, is, That the Publick has as great Benefit by the Exercise of their Profession, (as they call it) as by the *Physicians*; This is a direct setting themselves upon the same Level with the *Physicians*: But is the compounding of Med'cines of as great Benefit to the Publick, as the inventing them? Is any of our *Apothecaries* of as great use to the World, as *Harvey*, *Willis*, *Bates*; nay, old *Galen* and *Hippocrates* too. They call their Trade a Profession, and themselves Professors; as well may Cooks and Bakers. They say they are a part of *Physick*; of the Mechanical part of it they are, but not of the Science of *Physick*, of which they are no more a part, than those that can make Sage Posset-Drink, and Mace Ale.

The fourth thing they pretend to, is, That 13300 Families receive advantage by their undisturb'd Attendance, as if no Body had to do in these Families but themselves; whereas they most lamentably complain that the *Quacks* take most of their Business from them; and 'tis true in Fact, that the Face of the Poor being grinded by their Extortion in their Bills, which they are not able to pay, generally apply themselves to the *Quacks*.

A fifth thing by them openly pleaded, was, That they must needs have as great Skill as any *Physician*; for the *Physician* has only his own Prescriptions, whereas they see those of most of the best and learned'st *Physicians*, and so get great Experience. Indeed had they any true Foundation in the grounds of *Physick*, did they understand the true natural Philosophy Anatomy, the Seat of Diseases, with their Symptoms, and the Reasons of them, this might be of Advantage to them, as it is to the Young *Physicians*, who improve themselves in the Universities, in their Travels, and here in Town, by visiting Hospitals, consulting the Files, and frequenting the company of the most eminent Practisers: But they wanting this Foundation, the Argument is just as true, as if the Clerk of the Temple Church should declare, that he must needs be a better Divine than the Learned Master, Dr *Sherlock*; for Dr *Sherlock* only knows what himself knows, and hears himself preach; but he the Clerk hears both him and all the Eminent Divines that usually preach to those Ingenious Societies, and that upon most Subjects and Cases in Divinity, and therefore he must needs be the greater Theologue of the two. It is tedious to pursue these Gentlemen in the rest of their very presumptuous Allegations. In short, what they pretend, is Charity, unwearied diligence to the Sick, and Publick Good, like generous and disinterested Men; whereas pull off the Mask, and you'll find a Liberty of Practice is all they aim at; the rest is Sham and Banter: And indeed the only way to make that plausible Pretence of theirs real Charity, was to find out some means to regulate their unreasonable Bills, which are both burthenous to the Rich, and ruinous to the Poor; which may easily be done, by giving the President and Censors of the *Colledge of Physicians* power to tax them, or by some other methods the Parliament shall think more fitting, according to the custom of other Foreign Countries. It is hoped, for the encouragement of the Science of *Physick*, and for the sake of their Younger Sons, (many of which may have a Subsistence from this Facility) the Parliament will not think fit to give them this their dear Liberty of Practice, the very *Diana* of all their Hopes.